



יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵהֶי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּשַׁלַּח מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם,
רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף לַפְּצוּעֵי הַמִּלְחָמוֹת, וְלַנִּפְגְּעֵי מַעֲשֵׂי טְרוֹר וְאַנְטִישִׁמְיוֹת
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְכָל מְקוֹם שֶׁהֵם - עִם שְׂאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמֵן.



May HaShem protect our soldiers; may He send Refu'ah Sh'leima to the many injured;
may He console the bereaved families and all of Israel; may He end these wars
with total success and peace for Medinat Yisrael and Klal Yisrael wherever we are.



YERUSHALAYIM in/out for **SHABBAT B'REISHIT**

כ"ט תשרי ה'תשפ"ז • October 9-10, '26

 **5:39 PM** Plag **5:02 PM** •  **6:49 PM** R' Tam **7:25 PM**

Use the Z'MANIM link for other locales

PhiloTorah (327br) < 1 > all at once file



Shabbat M'vorchim

Shabbat B'reishit is always Shabbat M'vorchim Marcheshvan; no other sedra is always M'vorchim.

Rosh Chodesh Marcheshvan will be Sunday and Monday.

RC'h being on Sunday makes this Shabbat MACHAR CHODESH and the special Haftara for Machar Chodesh preempts the regular Haftara of B'reishit.

ראש חודש מרחשון יהיה מחר ביום ראשון
וביום שני הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה:

The molad of Marcheshvan is on Sunday, 9 hours, 43 minutes, 2 chalakim.

המולד יהיה מחר יום ראשון, ארבעים ושלש
דקות ושני חלקים אחרי תשע בבוקר.

The molad translates to 10:22am Israel Summer Time.

In Rambam notation - א' טו:תשעו -
ALEF = Sunday, TET-VAV is 15 hours
after 6:00pm of Motza'ei Shabbat
(the eve of Sunday), TAV-SHIN-AYIN-
VAV = 776 chalakim (1080 parts to an
hour; Rambam did not use minutes)

The actual (astronomical) molad (a.k.a
the New Moon) is Sat. 6:49pm - right
at Shabbat out time - coincidental.

As noted, B'reishit is always
M'vorchim. No other sedra has that
claim. So what's their story?

Marcheshvan: ALWAYS B'reishit.

Kislev: Mostly Chayei Sara;
sometimes To-l'dot

Tevet: Mostly Vayeishev; sometimes
Mikeitz

Sh'vat: Va'eira; but often Sh'mot

Adar: Mostly Mishpatim; rare Yitro

Adar Rishon: Mostly Mishpatim;
rare Yitro

Adar Sheini: Usually Vayakhel; once in
a while P'kudei

Nisan: 12-month year - Mostly
Vayakhel-P'kudei; rare P'kudei

13-month year - mostly Sh'mini;
sometimes Tazri'a

Iyar: 12-month year - always Sh'mini;
13-month year - Acharei or K'doshim
and sometimes Acharei in Chul and
K'doshim in Eretz Yisrael

Sivan: B'har-B'chukotai or Bamidbar;
sometimes Bamidbar in Israel and
B'chukotai outside. Rarest: B'har-
B'chukotai in Chul; B'chukotai alone
in Israel.

Tamuz: Sh'lach or Korach; or Sh'lach
in Chul and Korach in Israel.

Av: usually Matot-Mas'ei; sometimes
Pinchas; rare Matot or Masei; some-
times Pinchas in Chul - Matot in Israel

Elul: mostly R'ei; rarer, Eikev

B'REISHIT

1st of the 54 sedras;

1st of 12 in B'reishit



Written on 241 lines in a Torah, rank 9

23 Parshiyot; 10 open, 13 closed, rank 6

146 p'sukim - rank: 8th (5th in B'rei.),
same as Mikeitz; but Miketz is longer
in lines, words, letters

1931 words - ranks 8 (5th in B'reishit)

7235 letters - ranks 11 (5th in B'reishit)

MITZVOT

One (positive) mitzva in B'reishit -
viz. Be fruitful and multiply...

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a
parsha p'tucha or s'tuma. X:Y is [Perek:Pasuk](#) of
the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of
p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [\[square brackets\]](#) are the
Mitzva-count of Sefer HaChinuch AND
Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. **A**=ASEI; **L**=LAV
(prohibition). **X:Y** is the perek & pasuk from
which the mitzva comes.

Kohen - First Aliya - 34 p'sukim - 1:1-2:3

This Aliya contains the first account
of Creation. We just read it on
Simchat Torah for Chatan B'reishit.

[P>1:1 (5)] The first parsha contains the

"summary" statement of Creation and
the account of Day One.

SDT: Baal HaTurim points out that
the Gimatriya of B'REISHIT BARA is
1116, and is the numeric value of the
phrase: B'ROSH HASHANA NIV'RA -
on RH it (the world) was created.
Furthermore, the letters of B'reishit
rearrange to spell ALEF B'TISHREI,
the first of the month of Tishrei (or
B'ALEF TISHREI - on the first of
Tishrei - same thing), "confirming"
the opinion that the world was
created in Tishrei (R. Eliezer), rather
than in Nissan, as the other opinion
holds (R. Yehoshua). If we could prove
things with gimatriyas and anagrams,
then R. Eliezer would "win" the
dispute, but as it is, the dispute as to
when the world was created remains
a dispute - and seems to lean towards
Nissan.

"In the beginning, G-d created the
Heavens and the Earth. And the
Earth..."

**Did that happen on day 1 of Creation?
Or is something before Day 1 being
described?**

The Torah, the book of B'reishit, and
Parshat B'reishit begin with the
account of Creation - as we all know.
A famous question is what do the
first two p'sukim describe?

Are the p'sukim B'REISHIT BARA...
and V'HAARETZ HAYTA... part of day
one, or does day one begin with "And
G-d said Let there be light?"

One school of thought - which personally works for me and helps explain a lot of things - is that first there was Creation of Something from Nothing (YEISH MEI'AYIN, Creatio ex nihilo) and then there was the organized formation of Something from Something (YEISH MEI'YEISH).

In the Beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth is understood as His creation of everything in existence from the state of nothingness in which only G-d existed. What that means is not really within human grasp and it should not bother you if your head hurts from trying to imagine that.

As the second pasuk tells us, the result of that first stage of Creation, was that everything was in a chaotic mixture - including matter, energy, time, and more.

Starting with the third pasuk - VAYOMER ELOKIM Y'HI OR, we have the six days of Creation, culminating in the first Shabbat - SHABBAT B'REISHIT.

Regardless of how long you think the days of Creation were - 24 hours, 1000 years, an eon each, or whatever, the first two p'sukim describe what took place in anywhere from a fraction of a second (Big Bang Theory) to immeasurable eons. Consequently, any question of age of the earth, fossil remains of pre-

historic animals, and more - are rendered unanswerable. There is so much more to say - and I often do say more on this, but not now.

“And G-d said: Let there be light...”

Thus begins the Torah's description of Days 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. And what happened on those days? G-d put everything in order, distinguished one thing from another. It was creation of Something from Something. YEISH MEI'YEISH. Forming, shaping. The kind of Creation that we can and should emulate in our lives.

And how long was one of these days of Creation? Maybe they each were a thousand years long. Or an eon. Or maybe they each were 24 hours long. Either that Torah talks "our language" or not. Take your pick. Either way fits (because there was a super-fast-forward on each day so that which would take long periods of time to develop naturally could fit into a day as we know it).

Shabbat B'reishit is a time of rediscovery and re-creation. Just like on Pesach and Shavuot when we read of the events of Egyptian slavery and the Exodus on the one and the events of Matan Torah on the other, and we try to put ourselves into the events, to make them fresh, as if today we came out of Egypt, as if the Torah were given today, so too should we enthusiastically read and hear the description of Creation and put

ourselves into the position of discovering G-d through the world and nature that He brought into existence for us. Don't just see things as "once upon a time, a long time ago..." -- get excited, because G-d "renews with His Goodness, every day and always, the Acts of B'reishit."

Without going into detail, here is a breakdown of the first Aliya for your consideration.

2 p'sukim, as mentioned above, for the first phase of creation. Notwithstanding the argument above that broke these two p'sukim off of the description of the first day (so to speak), they are part of the first PARSHA, together with the creation of Light, etc. Which might support other "understandings" of the "process" of Creation.

3 p'sukim for Day 1, the creation of light, the separation of light and darkness, and their being identified as day and night. One KI TOV. The day is called YOM ECHAD (cardinal number) rather than YOM RISHON (ordinal number), because RISHON has meaning only if there is a SHENI, which there wasn't yet.

[P>1:6 (3)] The next parsha is for the Second Day of Creation. The creation of the Heavens and the separation of the Upper and Lower waters. (Some say that angels and various forces were created on the 2nd day too. This might include germs.) Notably absent

from the second day is KI TOV. One explanation is that the separation of the waters was not completed until the third day when water was further separated from land. The assessment, so to speak, as KI TOV works only at "the stopping points" of Creation. There are other suggestions as to why there is no KI TOV on the second day.

[P>1:9 (5)] The next parsha contains the Third day of Creation which consists of two "sections". First, two p'sukim for the "gathering of the lower waters" into different areas and the formation of dry land. And the "naming" of Land and Seas. KI TOV. And then the Divine command to the Land to spring forth with vegetation. 3 p'sukim with another KI TOV introduce us to the Plant Kingdom.

[P>1:14 (6)] Next we find the account of Creation on the fourth day. The Sun, Moon and stars (and other "heavenly bodies") are placed in their appointed positions and orbits. KI TOV.

Interesting to note that the Sun and the Moon (which are interestingly not named here) are called the Great Luminaries and in the same pasuk, it is the Sun that keeps the title and the Moon is called the Me'or HaKatan, the small luminary. Aside from the Midrashic explanations, there is an important physical observation to note. Comparing the Sun and the Moon, we find that the Sun has a diameter about 400 times greater than the Moon. If that doesn't sound

that impressive, look at it this way: 64,000,000 Moons would fit into the Sun. From this perspective, the Sun is certainly the Me'or HaGadol to the Moon's Me'or HaKatan.

But look at things another way. Because the Sun is approx. 400 times more distant from the Earth as is the Moon, the Sun and the Moon appear to us as the same size. If you have seen the Sun through a cloud or during a dust storm, the Sun looked very much like a full Moon. furthermore, during a total solar eclipse the Moon will approximately cover the disk of the Sun as if they were a matched set. No other heavenly body - star or planet - appears to us as more than a point of light (to the naked eye). As such, they (Sun & Moon) are the Me'orot HaG'dolim. Sometimes it is actual size that matters, but sometimes it is how we perceive things that is significant. This pasuk teaches us both perspectives.

[P>1:20 (4)] Next comes the Fifth Day, with its account of Animal Kingdom, part one. Swarming insects, fish, birds. KI TOV. And P'RU URVU.

[P>1:24 (8)] Next comes the largest parsha yet, with the formation of the Animal Kingdom, part two. Land animals (most mammals). "Creepy things" probably includes most reptiles as well.

Fifth day creatures and sixth day

creatures do not necessarily divide along modern biology's taxonomic guidelines. For example, dolphins and bears are both mammals (and NFL teams), but aquatic mammals were (probably) created on the fifth day. The bat, although a mammal, (probably) preceded the mouse by a day. What about flightless birds? And mammals that spend much time in the water, but do come onto land at times? Good questions (not necessarily practical ones, but...). One KI TOV.

Then comes the formation of human beings, first as a single being both male and female and then separated into two different beings, male and female (but with some "crossing" of characteristics). P'RU URVU [1, A212 1:28], which will combine them once again (in a sense). TOV M'OD. THE sixth day. YOM HASHISHI.

An interesting gimatriya:

A person with both male and female parts is called an androgynos. The gimatriya of the Hebrew (Aramaic) word is 390. ZACHAR UN'KEIVA, male and female, also equals 390. The observation is attributed to Rabbi Yehuda HaChasid (12th century c.e.).

[P>2:1 (3)] This relatively long first Aliya concludes with the 3-pasuk parsha introducing us to Shabbat B'reishit, the day that G-d blessed and sanctified because He "rested" from Creation on that day. We say this parsha in the Friday night Amida,

right after the Friday night Amida, and at the Friday night table as the first part of Kiddush. This should tell us how important it is that we learn well (as best as we can) the Torah's account of Creation.

You might not know...

Why do we say VAYCHULU after the Amida on Friday night if we said it in the Amida and are going to say it again at Kiddush?

Last Friday night (Sh'mini Atzeret) and the one before it (Leil Rishon shel Sukkot) and two weeks before that (Leil Rosh HaShana), the Amida did NOT contain VAYCHULU. Originally, Chazal instituted saying VAYCHULU right after the Amida that didn't have those p'sukim. It was then standardized as procedure for every Leil Shabbat.

Yom Tov on Shabbat doesn't even happen every year. Something a few times. But on overwhelming majority of Shabbatot, we do have VAYCHULU in the Amida. Yet because of LO PLUG (not to differentiate), that Rabbinic decrees are often declared universally applicable, we say VAYCHULU after the Amida every Friday night.

Levi - Second Aliya - 16 p'sukim - 2:4-19

[P>2:4 (37)] Now we have a restate-

ment of Creation, focusing on Gan Eden, the formation of Adam, Adam's dominance over Nature, and his first prohibition - eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil.

"It is not good that man shall be alone" is explained in different ways, including that only G-d is singular. Man needs to know that as great as he can become, as much as he can accomplish, he is not G-d nor is he a god.

All creatures were brought before Adam as "candidates" for partner-to-Adam. None was found suitable, but Adam named them all (as people have done throughout the ages).

In the first account of Creation, Man was the final act of Creation, but not so much the purpose and focus of creation. In this second account, Man is presented as the focus of creation.

We must see things both ways in order to maintain a healthy perspective on this world, our role in it, and our responsibilities towards it and all elements of nature.

To paraphrase a famous saying: A person should write the following on two pieces of paper, fold each one, and put one in his left pocket and one in his right pocket. One should say: For me the whole world was created. The other should say: A mosquito was created before I was.

Shlishi - Third Aliya - 27 p'sukim - 2:20-3:21

The Torah's wording implies that Adam was first created as a combined male-female being, then (still on Day Six) he was physically separated as Adam and Chava, with the command and challenge of recombining spiritually, emotionally, and physically - "and they shall become one flesh".

Next the Torah tells us cryptically of the episodes of the Serpent's enticement of Chava, the eating from the Tree, the punishments for the Serpent, Chava, and finally, Adam.

The sin(s) of Adam and Chava are not just personal sins, but more significantly, they help us define and understand (some of) human nature. It's almost like asking, "How could they have done what they did!?! And the answer is, "That's how humans behave." Yes, it was a sin, but for us, it's more and different.

[S>3:16 (1)] This 1-pasuk parsha consists of G-d's "punishment" (call it "redefining") of Chava (woman-kind).

[S>3:17 (5)] And this parsha consists of Adam's "punishment" (same other possibility) and G-d's act of Chesed, in clothing the naked. This act is one of the many pointed to in our challenge to emulate the qualities of G-d.

It is interesting to note that the "story" parts of Shlishi and most of R'vi'i are part of one large parsha, but

G-d's statements to Adam and Chava, and His kindness to them are slightly isolated in the form of two parshiyot S'tumot, thus calling specific attention to them and the lessons we learn from them.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya - 21 p'sukim - 3:22-4:18

[P>3:22 (3)] This Aliya begins with the expulsion from Gan Eden, which is also seen as a metaphor for a re-definition of the role of humans in this world and of their (our) relationship with G-d.

[S>4:1 (26)] The Torah continues with the births of Kayin and Hevel and Kayin's killing of Hevel following the attempt of each to make an offering before G-d.

Kayin's response to G-d's query as to where Hevel was, echoes in our collective Jewish Experience through all the generations: HASHOMEIR ACHI ANOCHI? Am I my brother's keeper? Kayin said it to shirk his responsibility for his brother. We are constantly challenged to be the kind of human being and the kind of Jew who knows very well that we ARE responsible for each other.

We should remove the questioning HEI at the beginning of the question and the question mark from its end (not in the Torah, of course) and make our definitive statement -

YES! SHOMER ACHI ANOCHI!

Kayin's punishment and fate is presented, as is his lineage.

It is possible that Kayin sired different species of humanoids. This is how some want to explain the evidence of the existence of pre-historic man. Kayin's whole line was destroyed in the Flood. (Almost, that is. See further)

Chamishi - 5th Aliya - 8 p'sukim - 4:19-26

This portion contains the story of Lemech, the great-great-great-grandson of Kayin and his accidental killer. Lemech's two wives were Ada and Tzila.

The Torah mentions more descendants of Kayin and their roles as the "firsts" in various fields of human activity. Yaval (son of Lemech and Ada) was the "first" tent-dwelling animal raiser. His brother Yuval was a musician. Tuval-Kayin (son of Tzila) worked with iron and copper. His sister was Na'ama.

Rashi (quoting B'reishit Rabba) says that she was the wife of No'ach. What is significant about that is that Kayin's line was not completely terminated by the Flood. Although we refer to all of mankind as Bnei No'ach, who descended from Adam through Sheit, on the mother's side there is Na'ama and before her, Kayin.

This portion also contains Lemech's

lament for having killed Kayin. (Rashi adds that Lemech also killed his son Tuval-Kayin (accidentally, in his grief), because he (TK) directed the blind Lemech's hands with bow and arrow to kill what he thought was an animal, and turned out to be Kayin.

By the way, in case your Chumash does not have the same Aliya breakdown as is presented here, don't worry. There are different versions.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya - 24 p'sukim - 5:1-24

The lineage from Adam through Sheit (Seth) to No'ach (into the next Aliya) is set down, with the age of the father at the birth of the main son, and each person's age at his death. These numbers help us construct the first part of our timeline. Although many sons and daughters are born to this list of patriarchs of the world, only one representative of each generation is named. Some say that only the named individual had the longevity that is recorded; the "average man and woman in the street" lived much shorter lives. Others say that the lifespan of the human was generally much longer before the Flood.

[S>5:1 (5)] This is the Book of the Chronicles of Mankind... Adam and Chava were created. Adam was 130 years old when Sheit was born. He lived another 800 years after Sheit was born, during which time he

fathered many sons and daughters. He lived 930 years and then he died.

The wording seems strange, but is repeated with each generation.

[S>5:6 (3)] Sheit was 105 when Enosh was born. He lived another 807 years for a total of 912. Sons and daughters. And he died.

[S>5:9 (3)] Enosh, 90, Keinan + 815 = 905...

[S>5:12 (3)] Keinan, 70, Mahalal'eil, + 840 = 910...

[S>5:15 (3)] Mahalal'eil, 65, Yered, + 830 = 895...

[S>5:18 (3)] Yered, 162, Chanoch, + 800 = 962... (Yered is the Avis, K2, Buzz Aldrin... of longevity.)

[S>5:21 (4)] Chanoch, 65, M'tushelach, + 300 = 365...

Shishi concludes with mention of Chanoch, who was taken from this world (possibly not by death - according to Tradition) at the relatively young age of 365.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya - 16 p'sukim - 5:25-6:8

[S>5:25 (3)] M'tushelach, 187, Lemech, + 782 = 969, the oldest age recorded in the Tanach. According to Tradition, he died immediately prior to the Flood, which was held up for 7 days of mourning for him.

[S>5:28 (4)] Lemech 182, a son. He

named him No'ach (note the different wording for the birth of No'ach)... + 595 = 777.

[S>5:32 (5)] No'ach, 500 (note how much older he was when his sons were born compared with the previous generations), Sheim, Cham, Yefet.

The Torah now describes the deterioration of society...

[P>6:5 (4)] and G-d's "regret" for having created Man, His decision to destroy the world (almost). No'ach alone found favor in G-d's eyes. Stay tuned for the continuation, next week.

Last 4 p'sukim are reread for the Maftir.

Haftara - 25 p'sukim - Shmuel Alef - 20:18-42

Since Shabbat is Erev Rosh Chodesh, the regular haftara of the sedra is preempted by the MACHAR CHODESH haftara.

The connection between the Haftara and Erev Rosh Chodesh is obvious. The opening words are: And Yonatan said to him, tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh... The real question is why the Sages decided on a special Haftara for Erev R"Ch in the first place. No other EREV gets a special reading. (Well, Pesach sort of does when Erev Pesach is Shabbat.)

Perhaps it is because R"Ch is so understated and often ignored. This became

a way - in addition to Rosh Chodesh benching, every month - to say: Hear ye hear ye, tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh. Yom Tov, on the other hand, needs no reminder.

From this reading we see that Rosh Chodesh was celebrated with a special meal... Many have the custom today of marking Rosh Chodesh with a special meal - or at least, a special food item, dessert, ice cream, peanut butter cookies... (be creative).

The Haftara also serves as a source of the minhag of abstaining or reducing one's work on R"Ch.

With Israel's history resembling the waxing and waning of the Moon, we see Machar Chodesh as a hope-filled message of a brighter tomorrow. The cycle continues until the Complete Redemption, when the Moon (and Klal Yisrael) will be completely restored.



Palace & Family Intrigue

MACHAR CHODESH - 25 p'sukim - Shmuel Alef - 20:18-42

The story related in this week's haftara, a special one read when Shabbat coincides with Erev Rosh Chodesh, is found in the 20th perek of Shmuel Alef. The story related in this chapter is well-known because of **MACHAR CHODESH** being read more often than a regular weekly haftara.

Specifically, there is one year-type without a Machar Chodesh haftara, ten with one, two with two, and one with three.

The episode, as detailed in this reading, tells of a difficult time of trial, a test for both David and his dear friend (and brother-in-law) Yonatan, the son of King Sha'ul.

Following King Sha'ul's failure to follow G-d's command when warring against their intractable enemy, Amalek, Hashem removed His favor from Sha'ul and placed it upon His choice of successor, Sha'ul's son-in-law, David. As a result, Sha'ul struggled with bouts of depression and anger, even attempting to murder David. When David fled the palace after the King tried to spear him, he told Yonatan of Shaul's desire to kill him, something that Yonatan could not accept, as his father had sworn to him that he would not harm David. Our haftara tells the story of the two friends trying to reveal Sha'ul's true intentions. And, indeed, Sha'ul does just that, for when

David's presence was missed at the festive Rosh Chodesh meal and on the following day, the King publicly accuses him of being a rebel who was trying to usurp the throne. The truth of Sha'ul's intentions was revealed.

Soon after, in a secret meeting in the field, Yonatan tearfully reveals to David what happened and urges him to escape before he is killed. Yonatan acts nobly, faithfully serving his father and continuing to show him the respect due to him, and, similarly, David never attempts to harm Sha'ul in order to save himself, despite numerous opportunities to do so.

Although the opening words of the haftara declaring "Machar Chodesh", that "tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh" form the obvious connection between the Shabbat and the haftara, there is more we see in the story that helps us understand its choice for the reading. King David is symbolized by the moon (Tiferet Shlomo), explaining why we declare DAVID, MELECH YISRA'EL, CHAI V'KAYAM every month when we stand outdoors with a visible moon and recite Birkat HaL'vana. For, as the moon grows and is diminished, so too David had times of ascendancy and power as well as times of trouble and powerlessness. Most meaningful is that, like the moon, David humbly "diminished" his "light", always pointing to G-d as his source of strength and victory and not taking

the glory for himself. It was this trait of King David that endeared this military hero/psalmist to Hashem.

And why we await for his descendant to usher in the Messianic Era. ⚡



The fun way to go over the weekly sedra with your children, grandchildren, Shabbat guests

B'REISHIT



This ParshaPix contains straightforward elements and some riddly pics that will challenge older kids and guests • On and off light bulbs are for OR and CHOSHECH on day one • Rain

and ocean are for the upper and lower waters - second day • sea and land (seashore) for third day • trees for third day • Sun, Moon, stars for fourth day • birds & fish for fifth day • whole slew of mammals for sixth day • so too man & woman • Shabbat candlesticks for Shabbat • candy cain for Cain (Kayin) • Abraham Lincoln (L silent in English; sounded in Hebrew) for ABE L. (Hevel) • Havdala set up for G-d's act of being mavdil between light and dark • flute is for the first musical instruments and the use of metals, both mentioned in the sedra • the Terem logo for the word TEREM in the second description of Creation - the word occurs alone in Tanach 14 times, 8 of which are in the Torah, 5 of which are in the book of B'reishit - this is the first one • Sigmund Freud believed that humans are basically bad... that is what G-d said about humans at the end of the sedra • the dolphin and the bat with a question mark - both are mammals, which would find them created on the sixth day. However, there is a good argument to consider the dolphin a sea animal (like the fishes) and being created on the fifth day. So too, the bat, as the only true flying mammal, finds itself on the list of birds (flying animals) and, perhaps, was also created on the fifth day. Does it matter on which day they were created? There are some halachic areas, such as the TAMEI status of blood for animals but not fish... but

even with no practical difference, it is an interesting idea to ponder • the hamantash? Our Sages ask where we see a remez (hint) to Haman in the Torah. With the full understanding that Purim is post-Biblical, there are still interesting "hints" to ponder. The famous one is Esther and HESTER PANIM, which involves a play-on-words, but more significantly the concept of G-d's working behind the scenes at various times in history. With Haman, it is the play-on-words of HAMIN... Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to? What's the connection - besides HEI-MEM-NUN? Adam had everything, but it was like nothing mattered if he couldn't eat from that tree. Haman declared that nothing was of value to him when he saw that Mordechai didn't bow to him. He too had everything, but... • flag of Ethiopia - KUSH, mentioned in the sedra • gold, crystal, and Shoham - mentioned in description of the Pishon river • and two Unexplaineds

לע"נ
הרב יעקב צבי ב"ר דוד אריה ז"ל
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l

The Garments of Light

B'REISHIT

The context is one of the best-known stories of the Bible. Together in the Garden of Eden, surrounded by the rich panoply of creation, the first human couple have everything they could possibly want - except one thing, a tree from which they are forbidden to eat. Needless to say, that is the one thing they want. "Stolen waters taste sweet", says the Book of Mishlei. They eat; their eyes are opened; they lose their innocence; for the first time they feel shame. When they hear "the Voice of God" they try to hide, but they discover that God is someone from whom we cannot hide. God asks them what they have done. Adam blames his wife. She blames the serpent. The result is paradise lost.

The episode is rich in its implications, but I want us to study one of its strangest features. The woman has been told that "with pain she will give birth to children." Next, Adam is informed that he will face a life of painful toil. There then follows a sequence of three verses which seem to have no connection with one another. Indeed, they sound like a complete non sequitur:

"By the sweat of your brow", God says to Adam, "will you eat bread, until you return to the land, for from there you were taken. You are dust, and you will return to dust." Then the man named his wife Chava, for she would become the mother of all life. Then the Lord, God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. (B'reishit 3:19-21)

The problems are obvious. Adam has just blamed his wife for leading him into sin. He has also been condemned to mortality. Why, at just this juncture, does he turn to her and give her a new name? And why, immediately afterward, as they are about to be exiled from Eden, does God perform an act of kindness to the couple - giving dignity to the very symbol of their sin, the clothes with which they hide their shame? The mood seems to have changed for no reason. The bitter acrimony of the previous verses suddenly dissolves, and instead - between Adam and his wife, and between God and the couple - there is a new tenderness. Rashi is so perplexed that he suggests that the middle verse is out of chronological sequence. It is the end, not of the story of the sin of eating the forbidden fruit, but of the earlier scene in which Adam gave names to the animals and while doing so found "no suitable companion". As we will see, that is not the only way of interpreting it.

Stranger still is the interpretation given by the first century sage Rabbi Meir to the phrase "garments of skin", BIGDEI OR. Rabbi Meir reads the AYIN of the second word as an ALEF, BIGDEI OR - and thus interprets the phrase as "garments of light". This is an almost mystical suggestion and a deeply intriguing one. Why - not when they were in paradise, but as they were leaving it - were the couple bathed with Divine radiance, clothed in "garments of light"?

Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said, "It is impossible for there to be a session in the house of study without some new interpretation." In that spirit let us see whether we can find new meaning in this passage.

When he heard the words, "dust you are and to dust you will return", it was the first time Adam became conscious of his mortality. There is no more profound self-knowledge than this - that the world will one day be without us, and we without the world. Much of civilisation has turned on this single fact, that our lives are finite, a microsecond in the context of eternity; that however long we live, our time is limited and all too short. The Torah is silent on what Adam's thoughts were in the wake of this discovery, but we can reconstruct them. Until then, death had not entered his consciousness, but now it did. What, if we are mortal, will live

on? Is there a part of us that will continue, even though we ourselves are no longer here? It was then that Adam remembered God's words to the woman. She would give birth to children - in pain, to be sure, but she would bring new life into the world.

Suddenly Adam knew that though we die, if we are privileged to have children, something of us will live on: our genes, our influence, our example, our ideals. That is our immortality. This was an idea that eventually shaped the character of the whole of Judaism in contradistinction to most other cultures in ancient and modern times. The Tower of Babel and the great buildings of Ramses II - the two most significant glimpses the Torah gives us of the empires of the ancient world - testify to the idea that we defeat mortality by building monuments that outlast the winds and sands of time. Judaism had a quite different idea, that we defeat mortality by engraving our ideals on the hearts of our children, and they on theirs, and so on to the end of time. Where the Mesopotamians and Egyptians thought of buildings, Avraham and his descendants thought of builders ("Call them not 'your children' but 'your builders'"). Judaism became the most child-centred of faiths.

But there is one significant difference between personal immortality and

the immortality we gain by those we bring to life and who will live on after us. The latter cannot be achieved alone. Until he became aware of his mortality, Adam could think of his wife as a mere EIZER K'NEGDO, usually translated as "a suitable helper". He thought of her as his assistant, not his equal. "She shall be called 'woman' [ISHA] for she was taken from man [ISH]." She was, in his eyes, an extension of himself.

Now he knew otherwise. Without Chava, Adam could not have children - and children were his share in eternity. He could no longer think of her as an assistant. She was a person in her own right - even more so than he was, for she, not he, would actually give birth. In this respect she was more like God than he could be, for God is He-who-brings-new-life-into-being.

Once he had thought these thoughts, recrimination ended, for he saw that their physical being, their "nakedness", was not simply a source of shame. There is a spiritual dimension to the physical relationship between husband and wife. At one level it is the most animal of desires, but at another it is as close as we come to the principle of Divine creativity itself, namely that love creates life. That is when he turned to her and for the first time saw her as a person and gave her a personal name, Chava, meaning, "she who gives life". The significance of this moment cannot

be sufficiently emphasised. It was not that previously Adam had given his wife one name and now gave her another. It was that previously Adam had not given her a name at all. He called her ISHA, "woman", a generic noun not a proper name (Incidentally, he himself had not had a proper name until now either. He is simply called HA-ADAM, "the man" - a word that appears 21 times [3x7] in this early narrative. Not until he confers on the woman a proper name does he acquire one himself, Adam).

With the appearance of proper names, the concept of person is born. A noun designates a class, a group of things linked by common characteristics. Nouns speak of sameness and therefore substitutability. If we lose a belt, we can buy another. If our car is stolen we can replace it. "Belt" and "car" are nouns, in both cases objects defined by their function.

A name is different. It refers not to a class or group of things but to an individual in their individuality. The primary bearer of a name is a person. Only by extension do we give names to non-persons for which we have special affection - a pet, for example. The concepts of "name" and "person" are intimately linked. We cannot have one without the other. The single most important ethical truth about persons is that none is substitutable for any other. As persons, we are unique. "When a human being makes many coins in the same mint", said

the Sages, "they all come out alike. [By contrast,] God makes every human being in the same image, His image, and they are all different."

This is what gives human life its dignity and sanctity. Without it, we would not know love - for love in its primary sense is always directed to a person: to this man, that woman, this child, in their uniqueness. One who truly loves does not love abstractly. The lover in The Song of Songs never tires of describing his beloved, her hair, her cheeks, her eyes, her mouth, the things that make her what she is and not woman-in-general.

This is also what gives human love its particular pathos and vulnerability. We know that like us, our beloved will eventually grow old and die, and that they can never be replaced. If we knew we would never die, we would need no intimations of eternity. But because we know we will one day die, one of the greatest things that can happen to us is the moment beyond time (the one we know we will never forget) when two souls touch and between them form a bridge over the abyss of mortality. That is what Shir HaShirim means when it says, "Love is as strong as death, its passion as unyielding as the grave" (the idea Dylan Thomas translated into the words, "Though lovers be lost, love shall not; And death shall have no dominion.")

At another and more general level,

this is what gives human life its sanctity. "A single life", said the Sages, "is like a universe." However lifelike robots may one day become, there will always be this fundamental difference between a machine and a person. Machines can be replaced. Persons cannot.

The moment when Adam turned to his wife and gave her a proper name, Chava, was a turning point in the history of civilisation. It was then that God robed the couple in garments of light. For it is only when we relate to one another as persons possessed of non-negotiable dignity, that we respond to the "image of God" in the other. In a sense the whole of Judaism - or at least MITZVOT BEIN ADAM L'CHAVERO, "the commands between us and our fellow human beings" - is an extended commentary to this idea. The rules of justice, mercy, charity, compassion, regard for the poor, love for the neighbour and the stranger, delicacy of speech and sensitivity to the easily injured feelings of others, are all variants on the theme of respect for the human other as an image and likeness of the Divine Other.

The idea goes deeper still. There is an intimate connection between the way we relate to other people and the way we relate to God - and this too is expressed in the difference between a noun and a name.

Though God has many descriptions, two are primary: ELOKIM and the four-letter name we may not pronounce, known generally as HASHEM. The Sages distinguished them by saying that ELOKIM refers to Divine justice, HASHEM to Divine compassion. The eleventh-century poet and philosopher Yehuda HaLevi made a different distinction. The word EIL was generally used by pagans to signify a god, by which they meant, a force of nature (the sun, the storm, the earth, the sea, and the many other deities worshipped in ancient times). Monotheism was and is the insistence that none of these forces or powers represents ultimate reality. Each is only a segment of it. The One God is the totality of all powers. That is the represented by the word ELOKIM. It is a collective noun, meaning, "the force of forces". ELOKIM is God as we encounter Him in nature, in the vastness and intricacy of creation.

HASHEM, by contrast, is not a noun but a name. It refers to God not as a power, or even the totality of all powers, but as a person, a "Thou". Hashem is the One who speaks to us and to whom we speak, who loves us as a person loves, who hears our prayers, forgives our failures, gives us strength in times of crisis, and teaches us the path of life. In one of the most profound insights in the history of Jewish thought, HaLevi taught that the difference between

ELOKIM and HASHEM is the difference between the God of Aristotle and the God of Abraham.

A philosopher can come to the realisation that the universe has an author, a creator, a first cause, a "prime mover". But only a prophet (or a child of Avraham and the nation of prophets) can relate to God as a person. Hashem is God as we encounter Him not in creation but revelation.

If we now turn to the biblical text, we see a remarkable phenomenon. In B'reishit 1, God is described as ELOKIM. In chapters 2 and 3, He is called HASHEM-ELOKIM. In chapter 4, for the first time He is called HASHEM alone. Something changes in the course of these chapters: not God (who does not change) but the human perception of God.

In the first chapter, which speaks about the birth of the universe and the slow emergence of order from chaos, man is part of nature. That is the (partial) truth in the discovery that we share much of our DNA with other life forms. It is also why God is described as ELOKIM, the author of nature. In chapters 2 and 3, man begins to use language. He becomes, in the words of the Targum, "a speaking being". God brings the various forms of life to him "to see what he would name them, and whatever the man called each living thing, that was its name." But thus

far he only uses nouns, first for the animals, and then for his wife, whom he calls ISHA, "woman". He has moved from nature to culture (of which language is the first step), but he has not yet understood the concept of a person. It is only after he gives his wife a proper name that the Torah uses the word Hashem alone. It is only after he has become aware of his wife as a person that he is capable of understanding God as a person.

Judaism was much more than the discovery of monotheism, that there is only one God. That idea is contained in the word ELOKIM. It was also the discovery that God is a person - that the fact that we are persons, with loves, fears, hopes and dreams, is not an accidental by-product of evolution (as some neo-Darwinians claim) but is an echo of the ultimate reality of the cosmos. We are not gene-producing machines but persons, each of us unique, irreplaceable, here because God wanted us to be. That is the world-transforming concept of Hashem - and it was only when Adam responded to Eve as a person that he could respond to God as a person. That is why the commands between us and God are inseparable from the commands between us and our fellow human beings.

Now we understand that extraordinary sequence of three verses. Discovering his mortality, Adam knew

that he could only live on through his children, born through an act of love. That was when he realised that immortality cannot be achieved by one alone, but only by the union of two. For the first time he looked on his wife as a person in her own right, and expressed this by giving her a proper name. Having done this, he was able to experience God through His proper name, Hashem. At that moment humanity ceased to be a mere biological species and became homo religiosus, man-in-search-of-God who meets Hashem, God-in-search-of-man. That is the profound message of the first three chapters of B'reishit, a story about language, relationships, and what it is to be a person.

Judaism is the story of how the love we feel for another person leads to the love of God, and robes us in garments of light.

Around the Shabbat Table:

- (1) **Why must understanding the dignity of the other as a person precede the ability to have a personal relationship with God?**
- (2) **How does having children help with the feeling of vulnerability that comes from mortality, and provide a sense of immortality?**

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH

Family Edition

Inspired by the Teachings of

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks z"l

Developed By Rabbi Cobi Ebrahimoff

We hope to include this ONE-PAGE Family Edition appendix each week after the main essay.

PARSHA RECAP

After the seven days of Creation, the Torah tells us about Adam and Chava living in Gan Eden. God had told them not to eat from the Etz Hada'at (the Tree of Knowledge), but the serpent tricked Chava into eating the fruit, and she then gave some to Adam. When God asked Adam why he ate it, he didn't take responsibility. Instead, he blamed Chava - and even God - by saying, 'The woman You put here with me - she gave me the fruit'.

Why do you think Adam chose to blame Chava rather than saying sorry to God?

Why do you think God put the fruit-tree in the garden if He did not want them to eat from it?

A Closer Look

"The woman You put here with me" (B'reishit 3:12)

Adam blames the woman. The woman blames the serpent. The result is they are both punished and exiled from Eden.

B'reishit is a set of variations on the theme of family, and none runs smoothly. With Adam and Chava comes conflict. With each successive generation, new tensions arise.

This is the great power of the Book of Books (the Torah) and the reason it has never lost its hold on the human imagination: It is about us, people we can recognise and identify with.

The real dramas are not the ones fought in court or on the battlefield. They are the ones fought and resolved in the home, between parents and children, between siblings, between husbands and wives.

Moral Matters: Let's Discuss!

- Why do you think the Torah tells us stories about people who make mistakes?
- Can we learn more from mistakes than from perfect behaviour?
- Every generation in the Torah seems to face tension or disagreements, this is part of being human. But why do you think that people so often blame, argue, and disagree?
- Adam blamed Chava, and Chava blamed the serpent. Does blaming someone else protect you from consequences? Why does honesty matter, even when it is difficult?



Message from the **Haftara**

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The Waxing and Waning of God's Presence

MACHAR CHODESH

This week, as Rosh Chodesh falls on a Sunday, we will read the haftara of MACHAR CHODESH, which opens with the words: "Tomorrow is the new month" (Sh'muel Alef 20:18). At first glance, the reference to the new moon seems incidental, a plot device that frames Yonatan's confrontation with Shaul over his friend David. Yet the haftara invites us to see beyond this detail. The significance lies not simply in mentioning tomorrow's new moon, but in what the Moon – and its rhythms – reveals about the relationship between God and the people of Israel.

The connection between the Moon and Israel is woven throughout our tradition. The Moon is always present in the heavens, though we do not always perceive its fullness or even glimpse it at all. It waxes and wanes in a steady, ancient rhythm. This rhythm offers a profound image for the Jewish experience across history and

into the present. Like the Moon, God's presence endures, providing spiritual light to our souls just as the Sun illuminates the Moon. We draw our strength and direction from that inexhaustible Source. And yet, there are seasons in our history and our personal lives when that light seems hidden from us, when darkness appears to prevail, when God's providence is no longer visible to our eyes.

The haftara itself reflects this pattern through the life of David. We encounter him at a moment of acute vulnerability and danger. He is pursued by Shaul, whose instability and paranoia drive him to turn on his former protege and hunt him relentlessly across the desert. David's safety – indeed, his very survival – depends on forces entirely beyond his control. He must hide, flee, and depend on the mercy of others. His life at this point is at a nadir from which recovery seems unlikely.

And yet, we know this moment does not define David's entire life. In time, his circumstances transform completely, and he emerges from hiding to accomplish extraordinary things: composing the Psalms, waging victorious battles against Israel's enemies, unifying the fractured kingdom, and establishing Jerusalem as its center. Though his life remains

plagued with conflict and adversity, he rises and perseveres. David's journey is one of waxing and waning, of descent followed by ascent, of darkness giving way to light.

Through David, the haftara teaches that this rhythm is not incidental. It is not a failure of faith or a sign of abandonment. Rather, it is the very pattern through which the relationship between God and the Jewish people unfolds and develops through history.

This profound insight finds its fullest expression in Kiddush L'vana, the blessing we recite each month to sanctify the new moon. We declare: SHEHEIM ATIDIM L'HITCHADEISH KAMOTAH – "they are destined to be reborn like the Moon" (Sanhedrin 42a). In the same breath, we proclaim: DAVID MELECH YISRAEL CHAI V'KAYAM – "David, king of Israel, lives and endures." The pairing of these two affirmations is not coincidental; it is theologically essential. David embodies the lived experience of the Jewish people in their covenant relationship with the Almighty.

As David's life rises and falls, so too does ours. There are times when we must flee, when we must hide, when we must endure darkness without clarity or comfort. There are moments of Jewish history when our brothers and sisters, sons and

daughters, stand on the frontlines of battle, are held hostage in enemy hands, or are destroyed in the depths of human evil – from Auschwitz to Treblinka. And yet, the promise of Kiddush L'vana remains: God has not forsaken us.

This is not a promise that darkness will disappear. It is a far deeper assurance: that even when light is hidden, when our vision falters, when we cannot perceive God's presence, we are not abandoned. The Moon wanes, but it returns. David flees, but he rises. The Jewish people pass through cycles of struggle, concealment and renewal, but we are promised redemption.

For our time, this teaching carries particular urgency. We are living through a period that demands we recognize these rhythms in our own reality – in the story of our people, in the story of the land of Israel, and in our individual spiritual journeys. The haftara's account of David's flight and hiding is not a story of abandonment, but a profound teaching about our enduring covenant.

When we bless the new moon and proclaim DAVID MELECH YISRAEL CHAI V'KAYAM, we are affirming that we understand these cycles, that we accept seasons of light and shadow, and that we trust – with the certainty of the Moon's return – that dawn follows even the darkest night. 



Hugs are NOT Seasonal

Here's my takeaway from Sukkot for this year. To be more specific, from the mitzva of the Arba'a Minim - Lulav, Etrog, Hadassim, Aravot.

I have a memory from when I was growing up in Crown Heights in Brooklyn. On the first day of Sukkot the Rabbi's drasha was about the Four Species representing different parts of the body - heart, spine, eyes, lips.

On the second day he would describe the Arba'a Minim as four different types of Jews.

Both ideas come from Vayikra Rabba. I would like to focus on the second one.

The requirement of taking all four together, otherwise there is no mitzva makes the point that all Jews - every Jew is part of K'lal Yisrael and none of us should dismiss the value of any Jew, no matter what he lacks in mitzvot and character traits that define Judaism.

We not only take all four together, but there is an additional HIDUR to

make an AGUDA, a bundle of the Lulav, Hadassim, and Aravot, thereby further bringing the different types of Jews together.

But it doesn't stop there. The mitzva is accomplished when we take all four species, all four types of Jews and hug them with both our hands, wrapping our fingers lovingly around them.

And we are not done yet. Not that it is a requirement, but there is a strong, widespread minhag (custom) to fulfill the mitzva, to bench esrog (as some of us used to call it), specifically in the Sukka. In shul, you will see people taking their Lulav into the shul's sukka after the repetition of the Amida of Shacharit and before Hallel. There are many people who will perform the mitzva at home (in the Sukka) before they go to shul to daven.

Technically, Sukka and the Four Minim are two separate mitzvot. But the custom to take the Lulav in the Sukka is very common.

And what happens in the Sukka? For this we go to a different Midrash, that of Shir HaShirim.

On 2:6 - "His left hand is beneath my head; His right hand embraces me." The Midrash interprets 'His left hand is beneath my head' as referring to the Sukka. The Pri Eitz Chayim, a sefer that contains many of the Ari

z"l's teachings, says that the minimum requirement for a Sukka to have two walls and at least a Tefach of a third wall resembles the upper arm, the lower arm and the hand, embracing the one in the Sukka. This is HaShem's hug. And this is especially so when we are in the Sukka bringing together Am Yisrael and symbolically hugging them. When we embrace one another, how fitting that we feel HaShem's embrace.

And as I indicated in the title of this PTDT, our attempt to unify our people (not to homogenize us all, but unify and not exclude) should be a goal towards which we strive and work - all year round. **PTDT**

דודן-דודנית 

Most people think that a cousin is a BEN DOD or BEN DODA or BAT DOD or BAT DODA.

Seems there is a more modern word DODAN / DODANIT. True, with these words you can't tell if the cousin is from an aunt or an uncle - but...

And finally, I have a word for First Cousin Once Removed. It is DONAN/DODANIT MISHNEH.

Walk through the Parsha

with **Rabbi David Walk**



B'REISHIT

What is Man that You Are Mindful of Him?

As we begin anew our annual Torah reading cycle this week, we return to the story of Creation. The birth of the universe is, of course, a remarkable story, but it's pretty much overshadowed by God's conception of humanity.

The genesis of mankind dominates the Creation story in two ways, first of all it caps off the narrative in the first chapter of our Torah and, then, its reprise in the second chapter emphasizes the special relationship between God and humanity.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik pointed out the profound ideas contained in the repetition of the creation of humankind. He observed: We all know that the Bible offers two accounts of the creation of man. We are also aware of the theory suggested by Bible critics attributing these two accounts to two different sources. Since we unreservedly accept the integrity of the text, we categorically reject this hypothesis. It is, of course, true that the two accounts of the creation of man differ considerably. This incongruity was not discovered by the Bible critics. Our Sages of old

were aware of it. However, the answer lies not in an alleged dual tradition but in dual man, not in an imaginary contradiction between two versions but in a real contradiction in the nature of man. The two accounts deal with two Adams, two men, two fathers of mankind, two types, two representatives of humanity, and it is no wonder that they are not identical.

But what are the differences between the two accounts and, indeed, the two images of humanity?

In the first chapter we have this remarkable verse: And God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth."

First of all, what does God mean by 'us'? Who was God partnering with? Rav Hirsch declares that this is Pluralis Majestatis ('royal we', as in 'We are not amused.'), because of the lofty position of humans in the scheme of things.

The Radak, on the other hand, claims that God was including the earth in this creation. The earth contributed the raw material for all the other animals, but here God contributed the soul. Rav Steinzaltz added: Although in a physiological sense man is very similar to other living creatures, he is nevertheless a category of being to himself. Unlike other

creations, man was fashioned in the image of God, not in terms of his appearance, but in terms of his essence. Aside from man's superior intelligence, this likeness is expressed principally in man's freedom to choose. This quality is unique to man and God.

Now we're getting somewhere. Man's unique position is clearly delineated. Humanity is cool, because we have Free Will. That's special, but now we must focus on what did God add to this exceptional position of humanity in the reprise of humanity's creation in chapter 2?

In chapter two we have this verse: The ETERNAL God (Hashem Elokim) formed a Human from the soil's humus, blowing into his nostrils the breath of life: the Human became a living being.

Immediately we must notice that the Divine appellation ELOKIM (used exclusively in chapter one) is now joined to the Tetragramaton. Clearly, a new aspect of humanity's remarkable position and role is being announced. But what is it?

Rav Hirsch is clearly moved by this new declaration, and states: In this sentence the whole secret of the nature of Man is laid down, and the whole higher dignity of Man rests on the facts revealed here.

But what's the secret? He explains that the unique manner of his

creation raised him so high that he is different from all the other creatures. It's the singular nature of humanity's formation that makes us so superior. We alone from all creatures possess a Divine element directly implanted by God.

Chizkuni adds that God personally, if you will, blew the breath of life into the first human, which was not done for any other being. This enabled humanity to have the wisdom (and 'Holy spirit') to discern the differences in all the other creations. But much more importantly, this granted humans an 'immortal soul'. The true boon granted humanity was an immortal soul, which survives the physical body it inhabits.

Now that's cool! But the Kli Yakar observes that we still have a dual creation process going on here. There is a first step in Chapter 1 which is an enhanced version of every creation. Then there is a truly unique added version of humanity's creation in Chapter 2. Why do we need both?

Well, the two steps in the test reflect two stages in human development. Humans begin very much like other animals (Kli Yakar alludes to the verse: man is born a wild donkey, Iyov 11:12). Our eventual perfection depends on diligent effort and good choices as one opens their eyes in intellectual endeavor as one matures. Our sublime superiority is not

inevitable, only possible through the tools God provided.

Now, I believe, we can begin to address the question which is my title: What is mankind that you are mindful of him, human beings that you care for them? (T'hilim 8:5). To a certain extent the very next verse in Psalms begins the answer: That You made him a little less than Divine, and adorned him with glory and majesty.

In other words, God loves us because in the Divine effort to Create we were granted unique gifts. We've mentioned a number of these gifts: free will, adaptability, and the potential for immortality.

But what is the purpose, the goal of these bequests? I think that's the \$64,000 Question (that's before inflation). Although it would be easy to declare: Divine Largesse. God was just being generous. Okay. But I think there's more.

I strongly believe that these gifts also make a demand upon the recipients. God created a world which is physical, and, therefore, not conducive to Divine Presence (SH'CHINA). AHA! We can be holy and make space for God in this realm.

God created an amazing habitat for humanity. We display appreciation by hosting the SH'CHINA. We make the physical realm hospitable for the spiritual, for the Holy, for God. Enjoy your company! 

Rav Kook Torah



by Rabbi Chanan Morrison -
www.ravkooktorah.com

The Hidden Light of Creation

Summary: When God wrapped Himself in light like a garment, this light took on His qualities of oneness, establishing an underlying unity throughout all creation.

Ohr HaGanuz

The very first act of Creation, as recorded in the Book of B'reishit, was the creation of light. And God said: "There shall be light" (B'reishit 1:3). What kind of light was this?

It cannot be the light that we are familiar with, the light emanating from the Sun and the stars. These heavenly bodies were created much later, on the fourth day of Creation. The Sages called this primordial light Ohr HaGanuz, "the Hidden Light". Too pure for the current state of the universe, God concealed it for a future, more deserving world.

What is the nature of this special illumination introduced at the beginning of Creation?

The Sages taught (Sh'mot Rabba 15:22) that certain topics mentioned cryptically in the Torah were later elucidated by David in the Book of

T'hilim. For example, Psalm 104 speaks poetically of the creation of the heavens:

[God] wrapped Himself in light like a garment and spread out the heavens like a curtain (104:3).

In this instance, however, it is difficult to claim that the verse in T'hilim explains the Torah's account; in fact, it contradicts it. The Torah states that God created light after creating heaven and earth (1:1-3). In Psalms, however, the order is reversed: God first created the light, and only afterward the heavens.

CHOMER and TZURA

The philosophers distinguished between CHOMER, matter, and TZURA, the form or function of an object. For example, wood is a raw material (CHOMER) that may be used to produce many different functional objects. Once it is designated for use as a table, the wood also has TZURA, form, having acquired a particular purpose.

At the very beginning of Creation, there was only CHOMER. God created numerous elements, but they were without TZURA. They lacked function and purpose. This state of disorder and dissonance is referred to as darkness – "darkness on the surface of the depths" (1:2). The Torah calls this unstable primeval stage TOHU and BOHU, indicating that it was

chaotic and empty of form.

Then God created the Ohr HaGanuz. This special light played a critical role in Creation. Just as regular light allows us to see and relate to our surroundings, the Hidden Light enabled the different elements of creation to interact with one another. It dispelled the initial state of darkness, when all objects were isolated and disconnected from one another.

To use the terminology of the philosophers, the illumination created on the first day of Creation stamped a functional TZURA on the material CHOMER. Through this special light, the universe's myriad objects acquired purpose and function and were able to work together towards a common goal.

To Wear Light

The Midrash (B'reishit Rabba 3:4) elucidates the verse in T'hilim, explaining that "God wrapped Himself in light like a garment and illuminated the splendor of His glory from one end of the world to the other."

What does it mean that "God wore light"?

This phrase indicates that the light took on God's qualities of oneness and unity, just as a garment takes on the shape of the one wearing it. When

"God wrapped Himself in light", this means that He introduced an underlying unity into all aspects of creation, "from one end of the world to the other".

In summary: the description in T'hilim does not contradict the account in B'reishit. At first, God created heaven and earth in an isolated state, as CHOMER without form and purpose. This was the unstable state of TOHU VAVOHU described in the Torah's second pasuk, when the diverse elements of creation existed in chaotic darkness, lacking an underlying unity.

Then God said, "There shall be light", creating the special Ohr HaGanuz, the Hidden Light with which He bound the matter together with a common purpose. God "wrapped Himself in the light", thereby giving the light His trait of oneness and making it a unifying force. After creating this unifying light, God "spread out the heavens" and stabilized the universe. The continuation of the psalm describes the stability of the world after the creation of light: "He founded the earth on its foundations, so that it will never falter" (104:5).

*Sapphire from the Land of Israel.
Adapted from Midbar Shur, pp. 95-96*

Rav Kook on T'hilim

*from an unpublished work
by **Rabbi Chanan Morrison***

T'hilim 27 - Tenacious Prayer

Summary: We must realize that each prayer brings us that much closer to our goal.

KAVEI EL HASHEM... Hope to God. Be strong and He will give you courage, and hope to God (27:14).

Why does the psalmist repeat the phrase, “hope to God”?

The Sages explained that one should be tenacious in prayer. “If you pray but are not answered, you should pray again” (B'rachot 32a).

Yet we could ask: If God did not answer my prayer the first time, what will I gain by praying again?

Step by Step

To answer this question we must understand the essence of prayer.

Prayer is a wonderful tool to elevate and perfect the soul. It accomplishes this by bolstering the soul's powers with images of holiness and perfection. There is an infinite number of such mental images, and God knows exactly which ones are needed to perfect each individual

soul. Divine wisdom determines what we are lacking and provides the corresponding stimulus for our prayers, thus enabling the soul to perfect itself in the appropriate area.

On occasion, a particular impression may not succeed in penetrating the depths of the soul. In such cases, acceptance of the prayer is delayed until the prayer is repeated sufficiently so that the soul will fully assimilate this image of holiness.

Thus we should not be discouraged if our prayers are not answered outright. All worldly matters have the potential to provide spiritual gains of eternal value. People are often disheartened if they do not succeed easily; but if we are aware that our actions are gradually bringing us closer towards our goal, even if the path is long and difficult, we will be encouraged by our incremental progress.

Malcolm Gladwell, in his book “Outliers: The Story of Success”, popularized the importance of deliberate practice to gain mastery in all fields.

Therefore, the psalmist repeats the phrase, “hope to God.” The basis of hope is our recognizing the value of these prerequisite steps. We must realize that each prayer, every aspiration and holy image, brings us that much closer to our goal. Not

having fully arrived, we need to “be strong and take courage”, to gather strength to continue our spiritual efforts, “and hope to God.”

*Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. I, p. 151;
introduction to Olat Re'iyah, p. 25*

The Daily Portion - Sivan Rahav Meir

A Star of David three years later

Translation by Yehoshua Siskin

Three years have passed. Here is a special symbolic story.

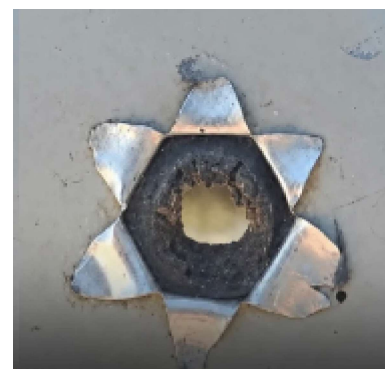
On Yom Kippur, we were at Kibbutz Gevim, adjacent to Sderot. Shlomi Davidovitch, a beloved member of the kibbutz, was murdered on October 7. In his memory, a synagogue opened on the kibbutz for the first time and it was named after him.

After the Musaf prayer on Yom Kippur, Gil Schwartzman, a member of the kibbutz, excitedly told us about one of the bullets fired by the terrorists at the kibbutz gate in their failed attempt to break through. The bullet struck the gate and exited through the other side, creating a remarkable shape, that of a Magen David (Star of David). The kibbutz decided not to close this opening, but to place a sign beside it.

At the end of Yom Kippur, upon leaving the kibbutz, we stopped the car and got out for an inspection of the gate. It was just a few minutes after the end of a moving Ne'ilah service, during which everyone had proclaimed “Shema Yisrael”, and sung “Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem.” I could still hear their voices in my mind when I saw on the kibbutz gate the symbol that seemed to tell the entire story: The enemy wanted to hurt us, to destroy us, but instead – he created a Magen David. He strengthened our identity. Through the wound he inflicted, he reminded us of who we are and that our story continues.

May we merit, out of this great pain, to strengthen our connection to God and unite as never before.

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by Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple z"l

B'REISHIT

The Pause Makes All the Difference

It is clear that there is a system in the process of the creation of the world.

Day by day things take shape, step by step the work moves towards completion. God, the great Architect, checks each stage and declares Himself satisfied.

The story is magnificent and majestic. But it is not without its problems.

For example, why does the system change once the sixth day is over?

Everything up to that point is material and physical - land and seas, sun, moon and stars, flora and fauna, man himself - but creation now becomes non-physical with the seventh day Shabbat.

The clue comes in the word LA'ASOT, "to function"; the physical world is created "to function", but subject to a condition: everything must have time out.

The earth has to rest - hence the sabbatical year. Animals have to rest - hence they must rest when we do.

Above all - man, as the only part of creation with a consciousness of time and purpose, must rest. This is why Shabbat was created.

Yet Shabbat rest is not just physical; the day is not merely for sleep and inactivity but for spiritual and cultural refreshment.

A famous pianist was asked, "What is the secret of your playing?"

His answer? "The magic is not in the notes, but in the pauses between them!"

Shabbat is the pause that makes the difference.

Is Man a Photo?

That man is made in God's image is axiomatic to the Torah (B'reishit 1:27).

The word "image" (TZELEM) does not mean anything physical, since God has no physical shape or characteristics. The "image" is intellectual, moral and spiritual.

Man is not a photograph of God in any literal sense, but metaphorically has the capacity of aspiring to be God-like.

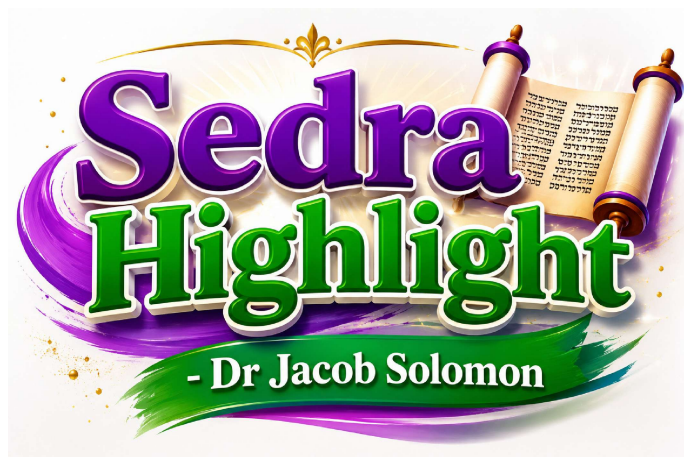
As God thinks and plans, man can think and plan. As God is just and truthful, man can be just and truthful. As God is sublime, so man can at least try to be sublime.

Man will never be God, but he has the ability to raise himself to be, as the Psalmist puts it, "a little lower than God" (T'hilim 8:6).

How tragic it is when you see human beings who go down morally, not up, who stifle their inner spiritual spark and ignore the pinprick of conscience, who know deep down that they really could look higher but simply don't want to.

On the other hand, how miraculous it is to find people who let their still small voice be heard and allow themselves to begin the slow but exhilarating upward climb. -OZ

Y'HI ZICHRO BARUCH



B'REISHIT

Six generations after Kayin killed Hevel, the world included:

Yaval... he was the ancestor of those who live in tents and herd livestock.

Yuval... he was the ancestor of those who play the lyre and the pipe.

Tuval-Kayin... who forged tools made of copper and iron (4:20-22).

All those individuals gave the world the benefits of their remarkable achievements. Music, meat and dairy products, metals for tools and structures... Elementary, but highly effective innovation and technology producing food and cultural entertainment for many, many people. Their values continue long after the inventors and innovators have passed on.

Yet though the Torah mentions these stages along the march to progress and technology, it seems rather unimpressed by them. It does not talk about them again.

What does seem to occupy the Torah is G-d's reaction to something that happened with an earlier-mentioned farming practice: settled farming. We learn that Kayin chose to be a farmer who worked on the land. He brought to G-d an offering from the products that he grew, but G-d rejected it. Kayin was deeply discontented. G-d turned to him in his disappointment. He told him that if he did the right thing there was no reason to feel let down, and if he did the wrong thing he was perfectly capable of self-correction if he would choose to exert the self-discipline needed.

There, the emphasis is not on the merits of settled agriculture. It is on

something moral, only incidentally connected with settled agriculture. It is on the choices we make in managing personal disappointments. DERECH ERETZ KODMA LA-TORAH (Vayikra Rabba 9:3), the Torah is built on the foundations of common decency between people. However disenchanted and frustrated you feel, you do not put things to rights by destroying people and property. Indeed, Sefer B'reishit with its events long before Matan Torah focuses on failings in derech eretz, in civilized and decent behaviour: the conduct of the Dor HaMabul, the abduction of Sara by the rulers of Egypt and the Philistines, the chicanery and manipulation by Lavan, the sale of Yosef by his brothers - to mention just a few.

We hear little more about technology. We hear plenty more about greed, jealousy, human failings, and the suffering they cause. Technology by itself does not solve problems. Common decency does.

And we see similar things today. The march to progress and technology accelerates. Quality food cheaper and more abundant through intensive farming and global economies of scale. Your choice of goods and services coming pronto to your front door with a few clicks and a piece of plastic. Information on any conceivable issue: health, legal, psychological, and practical, is yours to take

without troubling to find the nearest library.

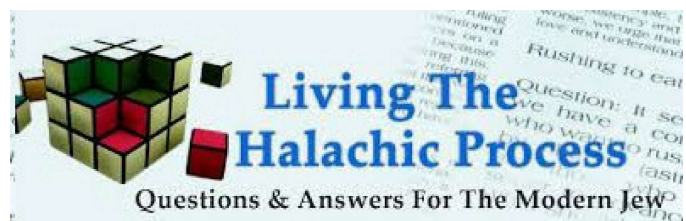
Yet something is wrong. Basic human needs continue to be unmet. The world produces massive quantities of food, yet out of 8 billion people on the planet, more than half a billion experience hunger, and 2.3 billion suffer food insecurity. The world employs robotic surgery and performs organ transplants, yet more than half its population are not fully covered by essential health services, with glaring deficiencies in vaccination, primary care, trained medical staff, and reliable supply chains. More than a billion people live in slums and informal squatter settlements, and many more lack safe drinking water and sanitation.

Putting all these things to rights in pure financial terms should easily be achieved without creating much of dent in the well-being of the wealthier nations and classes. Yet with all our wonderful resources, this has not yet happened. Technology and innovation have not yet reached all those whose very survival need it most.

It has much to do with the lack of derech eretz, now as well as then. Corrupt officials steal public money, elites sometimes capture resources designed for those further down the social pyramid, firms exploit monopoly and cartel power, wealthy

interests influence political systems to protect the advantage of the privileged few, and governments prioritize politically powerful groups over poor people who lack a voice.

So Sefer B'reishit implicitly shows that what lies at the core of the Creation is not technology, but qualities of decent and self-disciplined behaviour that take into account the needs of individuals, families, societies, and thereon humanity as a whole. Technology is a means to that end, but it is not an end in itself. Avraham Avinu doesn't actually invent anything, at least physically. But he shows hospitality to unknown strangers. He intercedes personally to save the people of Sodom from destruction. He negotiates respectfully with the Hittites for a place to bury Sara. And the Avot whose lives, trials, and tribulations form the bulk of Sefer B'reishit were not only people who strove to live that way in harmony with the Creator, but who were to give rise to an entire nation whose purpose was taken to a yet higher level through Matan Torah and its role of MAMLECHET KOHANIM V'GOI KADOSH to itself and to the world. 🌿📖



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Standing During Chazarat HaShatz¹

Question: Should one stand during chazarat hashatz? In my shul, some people stand, but most sit. Is this a clear halacha or simply a matter of personal preference?

Answer: We will paint a picture, based on sources, that is somewhere between “clear halacha” and “personal preference.”

The Rama² cites an opinion³ that people should stand⁴ throughout chazarat hashatz. On the one hand, he presents it as an opinion; on the other hand, he does not mention those who disagree. The implication is that this is something people are expected to do, but it is not clear that it is a categorical requirement, like standing during the Amida itself. The Mishna Berura⁵ explains that since

¹ Repetition of *Shemoneh Esrei*.

² *Orach Chayim* 124:4.

³ *Hagahot HaMinhagim* (Tirna).

⁴ In many areas of halacha, including in this context, someone leaning on something to the extent that he would fall if the object were to be quickly removed is not considered to be standing (see *Ishei Yisrael* 24:(66) and 23:(18), based on *Mishna Berura* 94:22-3).

⁵ 124:20.

listening to the shaliach tzibur⁶ is considered like speaking (SHOMEI'A K'ONEH), it is as if one were reciting the Amida himself, and one should therefore stand. Extending the logic further, it might follow that one must keep his feet together during chazarat hashatz, but the major poskim do not mention this, and very few people have this practice. Indeed, many sources indicate that chazarat hashatz is different from the Amida itself.

The Rambam⁷ writes that during chazarat hashatz “all are standing (OMDIM) and listening”, which seems to imply that one should stand. However, some⁸ poskim point out that since the Rama did not name the Rambam as his source, it is possible that the Rambam is referring not to the position of the body, but rather to the stopping of activity.

Although the views of poskim vary, the primary thrust of the consensus is as follows. The historically normative, preferred practice is to stand during chazarat hashatz unless there is good reason not to. Clearly, however, there were times and places at which very respectable people and communities did not stand. Further-

more, the matter should not be viewed as an outright obligation.⁹

Indeed, in some cases, the straightforward advice would be not to stand. If one is weak or sick, he can feel free to sit during chazarat hashatz. (This is true even when he can find the strength to stand for the Amida itself.)¹⁰ If standing encourages people to roam around and thereby detract from their own and/or others' ability to concentrate on chazarat hashatz, it is better that they sit and follow in a focused manner.¹¹

The case you speak of, a congregation in which a clear majority sits, is a tricky situation and appears to involve two related concepts. One is YOHARA (haughtiness). Classic YOHARA is when one does something that is a clear stringency in a context that can be construed as haughtiness. Is standing an act of YOHARA, and thus undesirable? Despite the general lack of adherence to the halachic preference for standing, it is difficult to consider that one who stands in accordance with the instructions of the Rama and many others should be placed in that category. The other relevant concept is AL Y'SHANEH MIPNEI HAMACHLOKET (do not act differently from

⁶ Chazan – one who leads the services.

⁷ Tefilla 9:3.

⁸ See *Yechaveh Da'at* V:11.

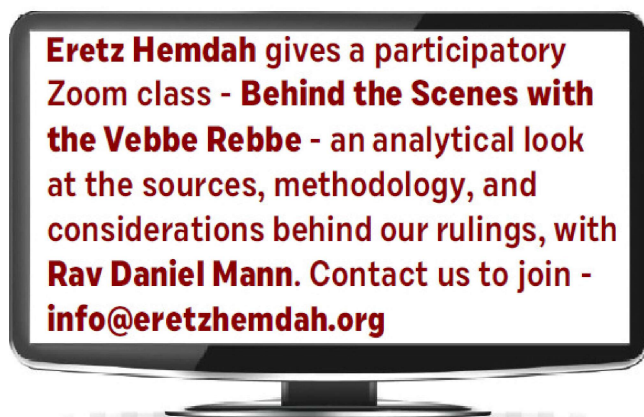
⁹ See *ibid*.

¹⁰ See *Ben Ish Chai* I, *Teruma* 10.

¹¹ Based on *Yaskil Avdi* II, *Orach Chayim* 2.

others because it can cause conflict). The gemara applies this idea not only to cases in which someone is more lenient than his peers, but also sometimes even to someone who is stricter than his peers.¹² In a shul in which only a few people stand and it is the type of community that is (overly?) sensitive to matters of possible YOHARA, we would discourage people from standing and thereby standing out.

It is important to note that even if one sits during chazarat hashatz, he should wait to do so until after the b'racha of HAKEIL HAKADOSH, following Kedusha, and he should stand during Modim d'Rabbanan, due to the bowing done at that time.¹³



Dvar Torah

by Rabbi Chanoch Yeres

Beit Kneset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

Graciously shared with PhiloTorah



B'REISHIT

In Memory of our friend

Chaim Abramowitz

Chayim Aharon ben Naftali Fischel z"l

Following the sin of eating from the Eitz HaDaat, when Adam HaRishon is confronted by G-d, he deflects the blame and argues that "The woman that You placed with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate."

Rashi comments, quoting the Gemara in Avoda Zara, that Adam revealed here his ingratitude to G-d for providing him with a wife. It would seem at first observation that the ingratitude was the blaming of his wife for his own misconduct.

However, I saw an interesting thought that gives a deeper perspective to what really took place. One can suggest that

the ingratitude was not what Adam said but how he said it. The creation of woman came out of the realization that man was no good on his own. Without a mate, man was simply incomplete, he required woman to help him achieve completion, and this is what G-d provided for Adam.

¹². See *Pesachim* 51b.

¹³. *Yechaveh Da'at* op. cit.; *Living the Halachic Process*, vol. III, G-9.

The word IMADI, used by Adam to mean "with me" which implies lack of appreciation of this quality of woman. By using the word IMADI, Adam showed that he saw woman as an opposing force and did not appreciate her true virtues. Rashi explains this in D'varim (32:39) that the word IMADI implies opposing me. The word LI however, has much different connotations. Had the Torah written ASHER NATATA LI, it would have implied that Adam understood that Chava - was for his own good. That form of the word LI "for me" is always used to suggest personal benefit. Had, Adam argued HA'ISHA ASHER NATATA LI, HI NATNAH LI", using the word LI instead, which would have implied "the woman whom you gave me for my benefit, gave me from the tree", that Adam recognized and understood how much Chava was necessary for the completion of our world, Rashi would perhaps not have made his comments of Adam's ingratitude.

There is a message here of learning how to appreciate those around us and to express that gratitude to them. Now, after the Holiday period, I would like to thank all those who were instrumental in contributing to the very wonderful Chag Sukkot we had at Beit Yisrael, this year.

On a sadder note, I would like to send our condolences To Debbie and the

entire Abramowitz family on the loss of our good friend Chaim Abramowitz who was very instrumental in our community for many years and would like to express our appreciation to all that he bestowed to each and every one of us.



B'reishit 5786 (last year's Hi All)

Who among us did not experience a bursting of joy and profound gratitude this past Hoshana Rabba as the news of the hostages was broadcast through the world. 20 men were released after two years of harrowing confinement and untold suffering; 20 souls, each a whole world redeemed. Indeed, ZEH HAYOM ASA HASHEM... (T'hilim 118:24)

No doubt, it will take time - and properly so - to process and fully appreciate and understand all that has occurred, not the least of which to attempt to make sense of all the events: the pre-October 7 internecine fighting, the horrific massacre on Simchat Torah, the subsequent two-year devastating war, and, of course, where we go from here.

However, often, in trying to analyze and anticipate the "day after" apprehensions, one can easily become cynical and fail to give due attention to that thrilling moment of supreme relief and jubilation when we witnessed each of the hostages joyously embraced by their loving families. True, there are many questions and serious doubts about how matters will ultimately play out here. Already, it would appear that the elation of but a few days ago has evaporated, and for some, it is "business as usual" insofar as the current political discordant situation is concerned. But we make a terrible mistake if we allow such legitimate questions overshadow that incredible moment of sheer happiness in watching the return of our hostages.

It is to this unfortunate misguided phenomenon that the following Midrash (B'reishit Rabba 27:4), quoted by Rashi (B'reishit 6:6) is so very apt. The verse reads, "And HaShem regretted having made man on earth and He was pained in His heart." And the Midrash: "A gentile once asked R. Yehoshua ben Korcha, saying to him, 'Do you not admit that the Holy One, blessed be He, knows what is to happen in the future?' He replied, 'Yes.' The gentile retorted, 'But is it not written 'and He was grieved in His heart?' He answered: 'Have you ever had a son born to

you?' The reply was 'Yes.' He asked (the gentile): 'And what did you do?' He replied: 'I rejoiced and I made others rejoice also.' The Rabbi asked him: 'But did you not know that he must die?' The heathen replied: 'At the time of joy, let there be joy, at the time of mourning let there be mourning.' The Rabbi then said: 'Such, too, is the way of the Holy One, blessed be He: although it was clear to Him that in the end men would sin and would be destroyed, He did not refrain from creating them for the sake of the righteous men who were to issue from them.'"

So indeed, deliberate and decide what must be done the day after, but let not those important discussions detract and prevent one from experiencing the overflowing joy of an entire nation coming together to celebrate the events of last week. Of course, beyond this specific application of the Midrash, the message has a much broader relevance. To illustrate: A wedding is being planned. The arrangements, honors, and the bills can be quite stressful. Worries abound; anxiety levels rise. Now, when the chupa begins and the festive meal follows, can the "father of the bride" along with all those who planned the wedding enjoy the simcha! Answer: absolutely! In fact, it is a great mitzva to do so. True, those many issues will have to be dealt with eventually, but now, remember well:

"At a time of joy, you rejoice...!"

There is a fascinating halachic analogue to this very necessary life-insight. The Talmud (Sukka 25a) discusses the exemption to perform a given mitzva while one is already preoccupied with observing another mitzva. The reason: one's intense involvement in fulfilling one mitzva precludes becoming engrossed in another mitzva. Asks the Gemara, if so, then one whose ship sank at sea, who is preoccupied with worry, should also be exempt. The Gemara reinforces its question: And if you say that indeed, it is so, what about a mourner who is obligated in all the mitzvot of the Torah, including reciting Sh'ma. Now, if a mourner, who is clearly pained and mired in grief, is obligated to recite Sh'ma, then certainly all others who are preoccupied, even one whose ship sank at sea, whose loss was merely monetary, should be obligated. The Gemara answers: "Nevertheless, there is a distinction between the cases. Here, in the case of a mourner, he is preoccupied with the observance of a mitzva which he must perform; there, in the case of a ship lost at sea, he is preoccupied with a voluntary act that he chooses to perform.

The lesson here is fundamental. Life is often a jumble of ups and downs: upheavals of pleasures and joys, of

tensions and hassles. The worries and anxieties of daily living can be enormous and often generate all sorts of insecurities, and self-doubts. Indeed, the mood can naturally be downright cheerless and depressing. Yes, at times - all true, but now it's time to perform a mitzva, and know that there is a simcha component to every mitzva - the absence of which, the Torah itself testifies was responsible for the maledictions of the tochacha (D'varim 28:47) - "Because you did not serve HaShem, your God, with happiness and with gladness of heart, when [you had an] abundance of everything. Is it possible to put all those headaches and upsets aside and immerse oneself in fulfilling HaShem's word and actually experiencing great simcha in doing so? Absolutely, yes! Difficult, for sure, but if your spiritual antennae have cultivated an acute awareness of HaShem's Presence everywhere and at all times, then to switch from a mood of distress and concern to one of profound gratitude and joy can actually be accomplished.

And amazingly, when such a spiritual habit can be inculcated and instilled into the religious disposition and consciousness of a person, life's difficulties - the very paradoxical human condition - become easier to bear and even accept. When you can detect HaShem's many small acts of chesed in the course of a normal day -

finding a misplaced object, unexpectedly getting than sought after appointment, receiving a surprising compliment or gift, etc. - your life becomes enveloped in a palpable Divine embrace which allows us to frame even the difficult times as a function of Gd's inscrutable wisdom.

And then, with this extraordinary perspective, when it comes time to perform a given mitzva and we wish to "payback", as it were, our profound debt and deep appreciation to our Maker, we are eager to do so, and do so with simcha!

Will all of our problems and distresses disappear? Of course not. But with Chazal's remarkable directive of "At a time of joy, you rejoice", our life can become a wondrous and meaningful experience, one filled with love and simcha!



Sukkot Reflections

I started writing something about Sukkot, trying to connect the reasons for the sukka and its importance with other aspects of the holiday, namely simcha and the emphasis on the word CHAG. One source was added to another source and I kept finding new information. It became very unwieldy

and disconnected. Finding that this was not a flowing idea but more a forced message, I had to put together something - at least in my own mind - that gave order to it all, not to dismiss what I had learned and had hoped to include, but to unify and make sense of it.

Maybe because I finally stopped trying so hard to put everything together that a new idea finally occurred to me. One that I think is true and, perhaps, even weighty. The word SIMCHA isn't used regarding Pesach and only once regarding Shavuot, while used three times in terms of Sukkot. In addition, the usage of some form of the word CHAG demonstrates something similar: Pesach - CHAG HAMATZOT LASHEM (Vayikra 23:6); Shavuot - V'ASITA CHAG SHAVUOT LASHEM (D'varim 16:10); but regarding Sukkot, it says CHAG HASUKOT SHIV'AT YAMIM LASHEM" (Vayikra 23:34); CHAG HASUKOT TA'ASEH L'CHA SHIV'AT YAMIM (D'varim 16:13); SHIV'AT YAMIM TACHOG LASHEM (16:15) and TACHOGU ET CHAG HASHEM SHIV'AT YAMIM (Vayikra 23:39); V'CHAGOTEM OTO CHAG LASHEM SHIV'AT YAMIM...TACHOGU OTO. For some reason, there is more emphasis on CHAG. What is it about Sukkot that separates it in such a way from the other holidays?

I returned to the original idea with

which I had begun, about the sukka itself, to see if I could find any insight. There is a difference of opinion about the mitzva itself. R. Eliezer says the mitzva is to commemorate the Clouds of Glory that surrounded the people when they left Egypt. R. Akiva, on the other hand says that the sukkot that we are commemorating are actual physical huts. What is the reason he feels this was the essence of the mitzva? Perhaps it is because of what the sukka represents. The Jews in Egypt had been exposed to the magnificent permanent edifices that represented the Egyptian culture - but this was not a Jewish message. We are in this world on a temporary basis, Life is fleeting. Nothing is "permanent". The physical form of the sukka emphasizes this. In addition, the verse doesn't say the Jews YASHVU, lived in these sukkot, it says HOSHAVTI ET B'NEI YISRAEL - 'I placed them there'. The verse also doesn't specify 'where' - it doesn't say BAMIDBAR - in the desert. Rather, it says B'HOTZI'I OTAM MEI'ERETZ MITZRAYIM (when I took them out of Egypt) - the sukkot were only there as a part of the Exodus from Egypt, a step towards a different goal, a temporary situation.

When I put all of this together, the emphasis the Torah places on certain things specifically on Sukkot, as opposed to the other Regalim, and the importance which R. Akiva places

on this Yom Tov, I thought that that might really be the message and the difference. What do I mean? Pesach is the holiday that commemorates our physically becoming a nation; Shavuot clearly commemorates our spiritual birth - the laws that would rule our lives in the most ethical way. So we have our physical nation and its spiritual underpinnings. What message does Sukkot add? The importance of the concept that life here is temporary is one message. But is it on the scale of the other two major ideas? I decided to look into the idea of simcha to see if I could find anything there. There are basically two kinds of simcha: the happiness caused by a specific event, e.g., Aharon was indeed happy to meet again with his brother (Sh'mot 4:14); similarly, there certainly was reason for the Jews to be happy after being saved from the clutches of Haman (Esther 8:15). But these were temporary periods of happiness and, with the passage of time, the happiness dissipated. The other form of simcha is the permanent kind. It's not necessarily something characterized by a smile on your face; it is more a sense of contentment, of satisfaction, e.g., EIM HABANIM S'MEICHA (T'hilim 113:9); BEN CHACHAM Y'SAMACH AV (Mishlei 10:1). Obviously, the more desirable simcha is one that lasts, that impacts your life.

It seems to me that there is

something about the sukka itself that leads to, or smacks of, this kind of simcha because I don't believe the Torah is limiting our celebration and our simcha simply to the performance of the mitzvot related to the chag. That would be "temporary". I would suggest that the simcha is related to the sukka itself. The message it gives us is what teaches us how a physical nation with spiritual guidelines can achieve a permanent joy from it. The sukka is referred to as TZILA D'MEHENUTA - the shade of Emuna. We live in a hut knowing that it cannot protect us from anything and we are forced to look above, beyond the s'chach and be reminded of the One Who protects us always. The One on Whom our happiness depends. Is it merely a coincidence that on Sukkot we have a cause for this feeling of permanent simcha since it comes upon the heels of Yom Kippur, when we were forgiven?

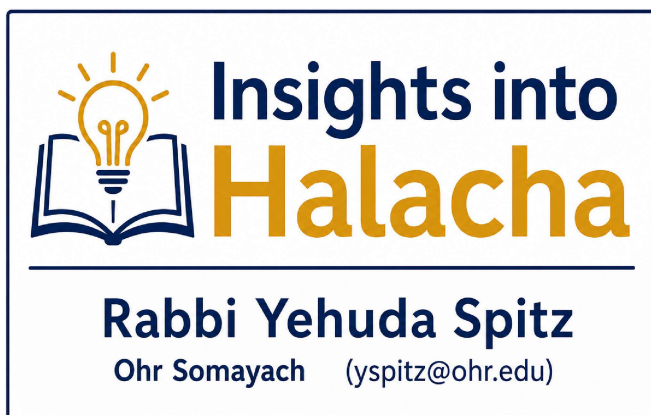
The message the sukka gives us is the crux of the issue. If our lives here are, indeed, temporary, then we are required to live those lives in such a way that makes them worthwhile. In order to do this, we, as the Jewish nation (Pesach) are to lead lives according to the Torah and the mitzvot commanded by Gd (Shavuot). And that is the source of the simcha. As Rav Menachem Tzion Zaks points out, V'SAMACHTA B'CHAGECHA can't be a command to be happy. One

cannot be commanded to 'feel' a certain way. As Rashi says, this is a promise, not a requirement. The joy that comes from one who does the will of HaShem, this joy produces the feeling of spiritual contentment. A feeling of this sort, this kind of simcha, can only come from the awareness that you are always in His presence and under His hashgacha. Sitting in a sukka, knowing that your success - or failure - is not up to you but up to Gd.

But what about the multiple usage of the word CHAG? What is the reason, the message of this emphasis? We need to remind ourselves of the real meaning of CHAG. The original meaning, from the root CHAGOG, is to encircle. It came to mean a celebration by describing the circle of joyful dancers. And of what importance is this circle? Rav S.R. Hirsch offers an insight. When Moshe asks Par'o to let the Jews go to serve HaShem, he says because it is a CHAG LASHEM. Rav Hirsch defines this as a "circle about Gd. Gd calls us to gather to crown Him". The emphasis on CHAG and TACHOGU literally draws a picture in our minds of all the people celebrating "around" HaShem. It is all about being with Him. What other greater way is there to express the simcha that the sukka gives us?

T'hilim (33:21) tells us: KI VO

YISMACH LIBEINU, KI V'SHEIM KOD'SHO BATACHNU. It is only the realization that He is with us, that gives us joy. We can rejoice because we trusted in Him and He helps and saves all who do so. Our bitachon (as in the sukka) creates this simcha. As the S'fat Emet says - there is no happiness like the happiness of one who truly relies on HaShem. ❀



New Beginnings for Shabbat B'reishit (and thereafter)

It is customary in many shuls and yeshivot around the world to make a special kiddush on Shabbat B'reishit. The question is, "Why?" Why is making a special Kiddush on this particular Shabbat such a widespread custom?

Those readily partaking in the kugel and cholent might just say, "Why not?" But there must be more to it than just indulging in gastronomical pleasures.

Some might posit the reason as a connection to Simchat Torah, or the ending and restarting of the Torah cycle. However, those events were already

celebrated on Simchat Torah. If so, what is the deeper meaning of celebrating on Shabbat B'reishit?

I would like to preface the answer with a story I heard from Rabbi Yaakov Minkus, a rebbe in Yeshivas Beis Yisrael.

Once during the Simchat Torah hakafot, the Rabbi of a certain shul noticed two congregants just standing in the back schmoozing away the time. Concerned, he approached them and asked them to come join in the traditional dancing. They politely refused. "Rabbi", they told him, "This dancing is not for us. For you, as the Rabbi, to dance with the Torah makes perfect sense. But not for us! You see, to tell you the truth, we didn't learn anything this past year, nor did we set aside any specific time to learn Torah. Any time we had the chance to learn, we spent the time schmoozing and wasting time. So on Simchat Torah we are doing the same. We have no right to dance with the Torah."

The Rabbi replied, "You are right and you are wrong. As you know, there are two different honors that are given out on Simchat Torah: that of the Chatan Torah and that of the Chatan B'reishit. The Chatan Torah is the aliyah where we celebrate the concluding of the Torah. This is customarily given to the Rabbi or another Talmid Chacham who has made great strides in his Torah learning over the past year. According to your own admission you are correct, you do not have much to dance for.

But there is another aspect to our dancing on Simchat Torah, and that is of

the Chatan B'reishit. This is the aliyah where we celebrate the starting anew of the Torah. Anyone can receive this kibud. So for this aspect of Simchat Torah you should also join in! It's a new cycle, a new starting point. So even if last year you fell short, now is the time to pick yourselves up and get dancing for all the Torah you will learn over the next year!"

This starting point, this new beginning is now – Shabbat B'reishit. We see it clearly in Parsha B'reishit. Aside from reading about the actual creation of the world from nothingness, which in itself is an excellent example of a new start, there is also the story of Kayin and Hevel.

After Kayin murders Hevel in cold-blood, G-d confronts him about his crime. After first denying any wrongdoing or even knowledge of the murder ("Am I my brother's keeper?"), G-d then metes out sentencing, and Kayin finally admits to the crime. He says just three words: "GADOL AVONI MINSO" (B'reishit 4:13);, meaning that "this sin is too great for me to bear."

We then find something astounding. G-d reduces his sentence in half! In verse 12, Kayin's sentence is that of NA V'NAD – wandering and exile in seclusion. Yet, after his admittance, in verse 16 it states that Kayin settled in the land of Nod, meaning exile and seclusion. What happened to the decree of constant wandering?

Chazal explain that we see that Kayin's t'shuva – even though it was half-

hearted and was done only when confronted, and after he at first denied any wrongdoing, and even though he committed such a despicable act causing the potential for mankind for all time to be halved – nevertheless caused his punishment to be mitigated! Not only that, he merited to see seven generations of his own offspring! (One of whom, Na'ama, was a tzadeket, the wife of No'ach, through whom mankind propagated after the Flood.)

All due to those three words that he said.

This is a powerful lesson to take from Parshat B'reishit, the power of renewal and new beginnings.

This is the message we can glean, even from a Kiddush on Shabbat B'reishit.

Even if last year we didn't accomplish as much spiritually as we could have or even should have. Even if Elul didn't work out as well as we would have wanted.

G-d is now giving us a chance for a new start, potential for renewal. That is the reason Klal Yisrael celebrates on Shabbat B'reishit.

May everyone merit utilizing this message for the upcoming year, and on next Simchat Torah may everyone be able to say that the reason they are dancing is due to their own personal aliyah in learning, and that they are therefore worthy of being the Chatan Torah!

For any questions, comments or for the full Mareh Mekomot / sources, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu

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ohr.edu/this_week/insights_into_halacha/

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz's English halacha sefer, "Food: A Halachic Analysis" (Mosaica/ Feldheim) containing over 500 pages featuring over 30 comprehensive chapters discussing the myriad halachic issues pertaining to food, is now available online and in bookstores everywhere.



Shabbat B'reishit

GM To be sure, there are differences between Shabbat and Chagim, halachic differences, different origins.

But there are more things that connect Shabbat and Chag. Yom Tov is called SHABBATON, a Shabbat with some permitted melacha. A Shabbat with a

lesser punishment for violation. The major concept that unites Shabbat with Yom Tov is the concept of K'DUSHAT Z'MAN - the sanctity of time. The mitzva of ZACHOR ET YOM HASHABBAT L'KAD'SHO extends to Yom Tov in several ways. The concluding pasuk of our introduction to Shabbat after the Six Days of Creation is B'reishit 2:3 -

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ
כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכֹל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

God blessed the seventh day, and He declared it to be holy, for it was on this day that God ceased from all the work that He had been creating [so that it would continue] to function.

And the pasuk that first introduces us to Yom Tov is Sh'mot 12:16 -

וּבַיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ וּבַיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם
כָּל-מְלָאכָה לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה בָהֶם
אֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל לְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ הִוא לְבָדּוֹ
יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם:

The first day shall be a sacred holiday, and the seventh day shall [also] be a sacred holiday for you. No work may be done on these [days]. The only [work] that you may do is that which is needed so that everyone will be able to eat.

These two p'sukim are a Gimatriya Match at 4928.

In the 4928 from Creation, the Rashbam

(R' Shmuel ben Meir) was 83 years old (he lived to be 89). Rabbeinu Tam (R' Yaakov ben Meir) was 68 years old (he lived to be 71). They were brothers and grandsons of Rashi.

4928 is an unprimeable because changing any of its digits cannot produce a prime number. (200 is the smallest unprimeable number.)



B'REISHIT

DIVREI TORAH

- The Torah begins with the story of creation where man finds himself in the center of the universe. The upshot of the narrative is to teach man that God is the Creator and that he is one of the objects of His creation. From the story it is clear that God takes pride in His work as when it states, “and God saw that it was good.” God’s greatest delight is to rejoice with His creation and especially with man, the crown of His creation. Israel represents the most precious jewel in God’s crown. Consequently, when we read this narrative, we should not overlook the central position that we play. Individual man should not be looked upon as an inconsequential small aspect of

creation, but rather as the centerpiece. Every Jew should look upon this story with great pride knowing that he is truly the purpose of creation and he will afford God great simcha. When we do not observe God’s commandments, then as the Torah describes it, God is grieved in His heart. We can bring God joy and we can bring him grief, just like every child can do to his parents. When a Jewish person walks in his neighborhood, he should carry himself with pride and conduct himself in a manner which would give his Parent, his Father, the greatest joy.

- As the centerpiece of creation, man should have experienced the greatest feelings because he was granted dominion over all other acts of God’s creation. Man was placed in the Garden of Eden where he was entitled to a very close relationship with the Almighty. “He perverted his ways and destroyed his livelihood” (based on Kiddushin 82b) and was driven out of the Garden in order to labor in a harsh world. His relationship with the Almighty would never be the same, and this expulsion and looser connection with the Divine created a downward spiral for man. By the third generation man introduces idolatry. The Rambam understood well the appeal of idolatry to the human being. Since he no longer had direct communication with the Almighty, man had difficulty relating to the

Divine presence in his life. He looked upon an item in creation like the sun and saw it as an awesome symbol of the Divine presence. He began to worship it because it represented God. That introduction proved to be a monumental mistake as his descendants would no longer understand the symbolism and would treat the sun as a deity unto itself. If we were to look at Egyptian theology and note the items in nature which they deified, in particular the sun and the Nile River, we would understand well how the Rambam understood the evolution of idolatry. Those features of nature which were predominant and looked upon as the most powerful in society were consequently thought to be independent powers and would become deities. By doing so, I see the act of idolatry to be the first act that would negate God's statement that man would have dominion over all the other acts of creation. By placing other acts of creation above us we demonstrate our willingness to negate our dominion. Idolatry therefore is not only an insult to the Almighty; it is also a negation of the Divine plan instituted in the initial act of creation.

- “And God saw that the light was good, and God divided between the light and the darkness” (1:4). Our Sages infer from this verse that God saw that the ethereal light of Creation was too precious to be exploited by the wicked. He therefore

stored it away for the future to be enjoyed by the righteous. (See Rashi.) This raises the obvious question echoed by Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1892 Lithuania to 1953 Bnei Brak, Israel): Why did God create this light in the first place if He was only going to store it away? The underlying principle is that once a light of such supernal quality has existed in the world, the path to reaching it has been cleared. Traveling this path means returning to a preexisting, albeit latent, condition. The most amazing part of Rabbi Dessler's comments here resolves the meaning of an enigmatic Midrash. The Midrash states that when a fetus is conceived and develops within the womb it learns Torah. In the moments prior to its birth, he is shown the vast expanse of the universe and is taught all the wisdom contained in the Torah. The instant he is born, he forgets it all. Why bother teaching him the Torah if the angel touches him in a way making him to forget it? Rabbi Dessler remarks that here too the purpose of imparting the soon-to-be forgotten knowledge is to pave the way for him to return to this level of understanding by his own initiative and effort.

- Hashem decides to create man and says that He creates man in His image. Rashi explains that the image and likeness of the Divine is the ability to understand and communicate with intelligence. Rabbi Simcha

Zissel of Kelm (the Alter of Kelm, 1824-1898, great ethicist and Talmudist) expounded on this concept in stating that thinking is a process that is unique to mankind, distinguishing man from all other living creatures. The reasoning power that exists in every human being is the very essence of man; it constitutes the “image of God” intrinsic to man. The intellect opens man’s eyes and leads him on the path of understanding and insight, and by means of his intellect he acquires wisdom and knowledge. A failure to think leads to man’s downfall. Without a probing, searching, and contemplating mind, there can be no hope for man. The Alter of Kelm truly understands not only the significance, but the responsibility that man has in understanding what distinguishes him from the animal world. By acting without thinking, man reduces himself to an animal and is allowing that aspect of his being to be dominant, which in turn is a true negation of the essence of creation.

- As a result of the story of the creation of man and woman, we come across an important line that helps us to define the marital relationship between man and woman (2:24) “Therefore man shall leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife and they shall become one flesh.” The “cling to his wife” aspect of the verse can be looked upon as

(a) a source of prohibition to homo-

sexuality because it is to the woman that he should cling, and not to a man, and

(b) as a statement of monogamy. The Talmud understood from this verse an inference to a prohibition against adultery because the man should cling to his wife and not to his neighbor’s wife. According to the Vilna Gaon the phrase “and cling to his wife” refers to a husband’s responsibility to support his wife. Man’s economic responsibility to his parents must now be deferred in favor of the needs of his wife. In the 19th century, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch comments on a very modern thought: Man is not unique among living beings in having a sexual life. Other creatures require mating only for the purpose of breeding. Because male and female were created simultaneously, they can function independently of one another. Man on the other hand is different. Woman was created from man to show that only in partnership do the two form a complete human being. Man’s sexual life with his partner is required for procreation, and for a maturing sense of companionship. We might add to this picture of marriage that the latter clause is an effect of the former clause being the cause. If a man truly does cling to his wife then his ability to create a perfect marriage will result. They will feel a fulfillment of their union and become

as one flesh, as a total picture of a harmonious and suitable perfectly whole marriage.

- In the Kayin and Hevel story the initial rivalry that existed between the two brothers manifests itself in God's act of accepting Hevel's sacrifice and rejecting Kayin's. Kayin became angry and jealous of his brother, whose offering was accepted by God. The Torah seems to separate God's act as being one of judging the sacrifice, but also a judgment of the donor of the sacrifice. The Torah mentions this in a way to implicate that God examined the character and motivation of the person bringing the sacrifice, and not only the animal or produce brought. While Hevel measured up on both accounts, Kayin failed to do so. It is possible that God judged Kayin in this way to teach us a very important lesson in the performance of mitzvot in general. God not only looks at the mitzva per se, but also the performer of the mitzva. It is not enough that the mitzva is done in a halachically accurate fashion, but the person doing the mitzva is judged independent of the mitzva. Our attitude, our character, will determine whether the mitzva is accepted by the Almighty. It is an immensely powerful message to think that in our world of mitzva performance, the judgment is not defined just by the halachic nature of the mitzva. In other words I can daven

and observe the Shabbat in its very finest detail, and yet be rejected because of a character flaw in my personality and in my Midot. We should prepare the proper mindset, emotionally and cerebrally, before doing any mitzva so that the mitzva and the performer of the mitzva will be consistent and accepted by Hashem.

Questions by RED

From the text

1. What are the first items created on Day One of Creation? (1:1-5)
2. On what day was Man created? (1:23)
3. What were the punishments given to the serpent, Adam, and Eve for the sin of the Garden of Eden? (3:14-19)
4. What was Kayin's punishment for killing his brother? (4:12)
5. When did the world begin to worship idols? (4:26)

From Rashi

6. What fruit was the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden? (3:7)
7. Why did Hevel choose to be a shepherd and not a farmer? (4:2)
8. Why was it customary in those days to have two wives? (4:19)
9. What did No'ach invent? (5:28)

10. Who were the “sons of Elohim” who married regular women? (6:2)

From the Rabbis

11. What was the main point of Chapter One of B'reishit? (RED)

12. Which Christian scholar disagreed with the Church and agreed instead with the Jewish view that Chapter One should include the Creation of the Shabbat?

13. “No'ach found grace in the eyes of Hashem” (6:8). What benefit did No'ach receive by his righteousness? (S'forno)

Midrash

14. In Creation, each item had its match (i.e. the seas were created on the second day and the aquatic life was created on the fifth day...). Shabbat complained to Hashem that it had no match. What was Hashem's answer?

Haftara - Machar Chodesh

15. Which two men of the royal families validated their relationship in this Haftara?

Relationships

- a) Adam - Enosh
- b) Tuval Kayin - Na'ama
- c) Chanoch - Metushelach
- d) Lemech - Lemech
- e) Kayin - Sheit

ANSWERS

1. Heaven, earth, water, darkness, and light.

2. Day Six

3. Serpent: he shall crawl on the earth and eat tasteless earthly things. Have strife with humans.

Woman: painful childbirth. Man will have dominion over woman.

Man: work strenuously for food.

4. The land won't yield its produce well, plus he will be a vagrant, moving from place to place.

5. During the time of Enosh, Adam's grandson.

6. Figs.

7. Because Hevel saw that the ground was cursed since Adam and Chava's sin.

8. One for having babies and the other one for enjoyment.

9. No'ach invented the plow.

10. The sons of officers and judges.

11. That Hashem is the sole Creator of the world; and He is in charge.

12. John Milton (17th century England)

13. That his whole family was saved.

14. That the Jewish people will be Shabbat's mate.

15. David and Yehonatan.

Relationships

- a) Grandfather - Grandson
- b) Siblings (children of Lemech)
- c) Father - Son
- d) Mechutanim (their children No'ach and Na'ama married)
- e) Brothers